

Message Text

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ACTION OPIC-06

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7987

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS GABORONE 0775

DEPARTMENT PASS OPIC

EO. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIN

SUBJECT: HORTICULTURAL PROJECT

REF: STATE 088778

1. WE HAVE DISCUSSED INFORMATION PROVIDED REFTEL WITH STEPHENS AND TILLER OF BDC WHO ARE MUCH OBLIGED FOR THE EXCELLENT COOPERATION FROM OPIC. THEY FEEL THAT THE INTEREST WITH OPIC HAS GENERATED AMONG U.S. HORTICULTURISTS NOW MAKES TILLER S VISIT TO THE U.S. WORTHWHILE. HE PLANS TO ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. ON THE MORNING OF MAY 10 AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE OPIC AS HIS FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS BEFORE GOING ON TO SEE COMPANIES. HE HAS ASKED THAT THE EMBASSY ARRANGE AN APPOINTMENT FOR HIM AT OPIC FOR THE MORNING OF MAY 10 DURING WHICH HE WILL WORK WITH OPIC TO PREPARE THE REMAINDER OF HIS ITINERARY. HE WOULD BE PLEASED IF OTHER APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS ARE ALSO INCLUDED.

2. BDC HAS PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS POSED PARA 3 REFTEL.

A. BDC IS ENTIRELY FLEXIBLE AS TO THE SORT OF PRODUCE TO BE GROWN AND SOLD. OUR PRELIMINARY RESEARCH INDICATES THAT ROOTED UNCLASSIFIED

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CUTTINGS OF VARIOUS FOLIAR PLANTS AND FLOWERS FOR EXPORT OFFER THE

BEST OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGH PROFIT. BUT ONE OF OUR PURPOSES IN WISHING TO MEET U.S. HORTICULTURALISTS IS TO GET A MUCH BETTER IDEA OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET AND ITS DEMAND TRENDS. IT MAY BE THAT AFTER DISCUSSION SOME IDEA ENTIRELY NEW TO US IN BOTSWANA WILL EMERGE. IT MAY EVEN BE THAT AN ELEMENT OF FRESH PRODUCE FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION COULD BE INCLUDED IN THE CROP PROGRAM.

B. THE EXPERIENCE OF SANITAS SHOWS THAT GIVEN BOTSWANA'S WARM TO HOT CLIMATE, GREENHOUSE GROWING IS NOT NECESSARY. BUT PLASTIC-NET HOUSES HAVE BEEN ENORMOUSLY SUCCESSFUL FOR MODERATING EXTREMES OF TEMPERATURE, FOR CONTROLLING INSECTS, FOR REGULATING HUMIDITY AND FOR SHADING PLANTS FROM THE SUMMER SUN. RELATIVE TO GREENHOUSES, NET-HOUSES ARE VERY INEXPENSIVE.

C. BOTSWANA HAS AN EXCELLENT GROWING ENVIRONMENT WHICH WILL SUSTAIN PLANTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. THE BEST GROWING SEASON IS FROM SEPTEMBER TO MAY, AT A TIME WHEN MANY PARTS OF THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE FIND PLANT GROWING PROHIBITIVELY EXPENSIVE.

THE PRESENT NEAR ABSENCE OF A HORTICULTURAL INDUSTRY MEANS THAT HORTICULTURAL PESTS AND DISEASES WHICH ARE ENDEMIC TO EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA ARE UNKNOWN HERE - PROVIDED SCRUPULOUSLY CLEAN PLANTING MATERIAL IS USED THOSE PESTS AND DISEASES NEED NEVER BE INTRODUCED. HAND LABOR SO NECESSARY TO HORTICULTURE IS PLENTIFUL AND CHEAP AND, OBSERVING SANITAS' EXPERIENCE, EASY TO TRAIN. THIS PROJECT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE A MAJOR INDUSTRY FOR BOTSWANA AND AS SUCH HAS THE FIRM SUPPORT OF THE BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT AND THE BOTSWANA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION. EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO HELP SOLVE THE PRODUCTION, MARKETING AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS WHICH WILL INEVITABLY ARISE.

3. REQUEST ADVICE ON OPIC APPOINTMENT
THOMSEN

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